SWIFT IV SEMI-ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

OCTOBER-MARCH 2019

CONTENTS

ACRONYMS

BFRP	Burkina Faso Regional Program
CSO	civil society organization
DDGS	direct distribution of goods and services
ERT	early recovery team
ICRI	Iraq Community Resilience Initiative
IRP	Iraq Regional Program
IDP	internally displaced person
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
IQC	indefinite quantity contract
LTI	Libya Transition Initiative
MC	Municipal Council
MTOT	Ministry of Temporarily Occupied Territories and IDPs
NMSI	North Macedonia Support Initiative
OTI	Office of Transition Initiatives
SRP	Syria Regional Program
STTA	short-term technical assistance
SWIFT	Support Which Implements Fast Transitions
SCD	Syria Civil Defense
TO	task order
UCBI	Ukraine Confidence Building Initiative
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VEO	violent extremist organization

INTRODUCTION

Chemonics International presents its Semi-Annual Progress Report for Contract AID-OAA-I-14-00006 (SWIFT IV sub-IQCs A and B) for the period of October 1, 2018 to March 31, 2019. Section I presents the performance monitoring report. Section II presents the contract financial report, including the notification of new task order (TO) report and the modifications to existing task orders report. This report summarizes activities specifically related to the blanket SWIFT IV IQC contract. TO-level reports will include detailed information on individual TOs.

Submitted to:	USAID – Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI)
By:	Chemonics International Inc.
Indefinite Quantity Contract (IQC):	Support Which Implements Fast Transitions IV (SWIFT IV) sub-IQCs A and B
Contract Number:	AID-OAA-I-14-00006
Reporting Period:	October 1, 2018 to March 31, 2019

PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT

Chemonics International has been awarded nine TOs under the SWIFT IV IQC: the Côte d'Ivoire Transition Initiative 2 (closed), Libya Transition Initiative 2 (closed), Ukraine Confidence Building Initiative (closed), Syria Regional Program II, Ukraine Confidence Building Initiative II, Libya Transition Initiative 3, North Macedonia Support Initiative 2, Burkina Faso Regional Program, and Iraq Regional Program. No major issues or concerns related to the SWIFT IV IQC were raised during the reporting period.

BURKINA FASO REGIONAL PROGRAM

The USAID/OTI Burkina Faso Regional Program (BFRP) TO was awarded on July 16, 2018 and works to maintain and deepen stability in Burkina Faso by addressing the threat posed by violent extremist organizations (VEOs). In the next six months, the program will focus on three problems affecting stability: 1) disruption of livelihoods, 2) weak response from the state, and 3) social fragmentation.

During this reporting period, the program moved from start-up to full implementation phase. Operational capacity was expanded to support program ramp-up and implementation by adding accountants in the Ouahigouya and Ouagadougou offices and an IT Specialist. A new operations manager was fielded as key personnel, and various short-term technical assistance deployed in country to build local capacity. Deliverables submitted in support of contractual requirements included a Security Plan, Activity Manual Addendum, Branding Implementation and Marking Plan, Phase II Staffing Plan, and C-IEE, EMMP, and IAP environmental deliverables.

BFRP implements countering violent extremism (CVE) programming in the Nord and Sahel regions of Burkina Faso, while gathering context information in the Est region. Between October 1, 2018 and March 31, 2019, a total of 26 activities, including grants, short-term technical assistance (STTA), and direct distribution of goods and services (DDGS) worth an estimated $688,590 were under implementation. Key activities implemented during this reporting period include:

- *Open Door Week for Civil Records in Dori*: Identity documents are a critical component of community member and national security forces interactions; individuals moving for work, water collection, and daily life are often stopped at the increased number of checkpoints across the region. Not having identity cards can lead to curtailed movement and frustration and harassment during these exchanges. This activity resulted in the delivery of 2,356 ID cards and 330

birth certificates to people in Dori, Sahel region. Beneficiaries noted reduced anxiety and increased ability to pursue economic opportunities with their new identity cards.

- *Yirgou Reconciliation Session:* Following a massacre caused by inter-ethnic (Peul and Mossi) tension sparked by violent extremists' actions, an estimated total of 2,500 persons from both communities were engaged in the reconciliation process. The activity included leadership from key religious and traditional leaders from the region, administrative authorities from the region, refugees from nearby camps, as well as significant participation from the populations of Yirgou and neighboring villages. Strong, public commitments for peaceful co-existence and reconciliation acts, including the rebuilding of Fulani homes, were made by both communities and captured in multiple national media channels.

- *The 7th Art: Youth Engaged Though Cinema for CVE:* Sixty-four youth leaders from Dori and Djibo in the Sahel, Ouahigouya in the North and Ouagadougou marked the 50th anniversary of FESPACO, a world-renowned international film festival, by simultaneously viewing a 3-minute video produced with support from BFRP and then discussing social cohesion challenges in their regions and possible youth contributions to facilitating improved cohesion and resilience.

- *March 8: Envisioning Women's Role in CVE*: Photographic images capturing women's roles in communities threatened by violent extremism were exhibited on International Women's Day on March 8, 2019. Twenty-five women from various communes received thematic training on countering violent extremism as well as basic photography skills. Their photos were exhibited in public areas (e.g. Mayor's offices, community centers, etc.) in celebration of International Women's Day, and six photos were selected for exhibition at the United States Embassy.

UKRAINE CONFIDENCE BUILDING INITIATIVE II

The Ukraine Confidence Building Initiative (UCBI) II task order (TO) was awarded on April 10, 2017 and continues the work of UCBI with an overall program goal of increasing acceptance of a pluralistic Ukrainian civic identity based on common values. The project works through four objectives in support of this goal; 1) bolstering tolerant, pro-reform community in vulnerable areas (both in the East and West); 2) promoting accountability of destabilizing, non-democratic groups; (3) creating constructive dialogue around divisive issues; and 4) and increasing awareness of progress in Ukraine and acceptance of the Ukrainian identity in the NGCAs (non-government controlled areas). Work under UCBI II during the reporting period was primarily in eastern Ukraine, focusing on population centers in the regions close to the conflict which have been targeted by external aggression. The primary focus of the program is the government-controlled areas of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, while also seeking to access populations across the contact line. The program closed out its Kramatorsk office on March 31, 2019 and plans to pivot towards focusing programming in western Ukraine.

Between October 1, 2018 and March 31, 2019, UCBI II initiated a total of 37 activities, including sub-grants, short-term technical assistance (STTA), and direct distribution of goods and services (DDGS) for a committed total of $2,720,435.04. Activities during this period focused on improving service delivery, expanding engagement in a modern Ukrainian culture and common values among diverse groups, and improving optimism about the economic transformation of eastern Ukraine among key stakeholders. UCBI II has no administrative or bureaucratic constraints to performance to report.

Key activities implemented during this reporting period include:

- *Enhancing universities with Career Development Centers:* UCBI II supported activities aimed at empowering universities to play a more proactive role in providing opportunities for students' employment and establishing links between universities and businesses. The decline of Donbas's economy, hastened by the ongoing war, has further alienated these regions from the rest of Ukraine and has the potential to disrupt future reintegration efforts. Fortunately, there is a growing community of small business entrepreneurs and champions in local government, educational institutions and civil society that are pushing for a much-needed economic transformation. As a result of this activity, three full-standing, revitalized Career Development Centers (CDCs) are open and operational at leading universities of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, and a total of 576 people attended 28 events, including trainings, workshops, study visits, and Career Forums. Because of these events, student confidence in their career prospects as well as their competitiveness on the labor market is increased. The staff of the CDCs, having organized successful events, have a higher motivation to proactively contribute to their centers' sustainability.
- *TV series for peace*: UCBI II worked with 1+1, one of the largest private television stations in Ukraine, to produce, promote, and broadcast a TV series about a driver who travels from occupied areas to government-controlled areas on the daily basis. All the scenarios were inspired by the real stories of internally displaced persons and those who stayed in the occupied territories. The goal of this show is to change the perception of the ongoing conflict, give a human face to the conflict, and show how it affects the millions of people who are impacted by it. With UCBI II's support, 1+1 produced, promoted and broadcasted this show, and are now considering shooting a second season of the show. The series – "Routes of Destiny" – demonstrated that socially relevant content could be profitable. The series is very popular and was watched by more than 27 million people on television, due in part to a robust promotional campaign. During the broadcast it was the first and second most watched show on television in Ukraine. It is also popular online, and the first episode gathered more than 400,000 views online with more and more people watching it every day.
- *Modeling transparent service delivery in Marinka*: Marinka is located close to the contact line with the non-government controlled area (NGCA,) and is the site of one of the largest checkpoints in Donetsk oblast. As such, it receives up to 300 IDPs crossing daily from the NGCA. The majority of these IDPs apply to receive

various types of social assistance in the Marinka Department of Social Protection (DSP). UCBI II supported the Marinka DSP to improve public reception areas to encourage a more customer-oriented interface between local government and citizens. The basis of the Transparent Social Office principle is the openness, accessibility, and transparency of the front office of the DSP, which contributes to counteracting corruption challenges, and enables citizens to receive higher-quality social services. This activity was modeled after a similar activity in Rubizhne, which has led to the Rubizhne DSP becoming a flagship in the Luhansk oblast.

LIBYA TRANSITION INITIATIVE 3

The Libya Transition Initiative (LTI) 3 is a follow-on program launched in May 2017 to support Libya's resilience to fragmentation and spoilers. LTI 3 utilizes a quick-response mechanism to implement activities nationwide aimed at preventing further deterioration in political and security conditions, and keeping the space open for civilian leadership, reconciliation, and a positive political transition. During the reporting period, LTI 3 worked toward the following objectives: 1) improving stability in strategic, conflict-affected areas, 2) increasing citizens' confidence in their public institutions; and 3) reducing the influence of extremist groups in strategic areas.

During the reporting period, LTI 3 reorganized the staffing structure to respond to evolving needs of the program and a strategic shift to support unified national institutions. LTI 3 created two additional Grants Management Units (GMUs) based in Tripoli to increase work with unified national-level bodies and support the greater Tripoli region. LTI 3's chief of party (COP) and deputy chief of party-programs (DCOP-P) visited Libya on three occasions during the reporting period. The senior management team's establishment of a firmer presence in Libya, including in Tripoli, Misrata, Sirte and Benghazi, has enabled LTI 3 to strengthen relationships with grantees, vendors, and local stakeholders and work side-by-side with staff to identify programming challenges and solutions. Additionally, LTI 3 conducted an evaluation of nine activities implemented by LTI 2 and LTI 3 between April 2016 and November 2018. This cluster of activities focused on key recovery priorities in Ubari to improve public perceptions of return to normalcy following 18 months of armed conflict between Tebu and Tuareg groups. Findings showed that the 'recovery model' used by LTI in Ubari was a successful one that can be replicable elsewhere.

LTI 3 is programming in the west, east, center and south of Libya, including activities at the local, regional, and national levels. During the reporting period, a total of 55 activities worth an estimated $16,592,257 million were under implementation. Key activities under implementation during this reporting period include:

- *Children's Festival in Derna*: The LNA besieged the city and launched a military operation to take control in May 2018. During the siege, the city suffered from food shortages and city-wide curfews. Although the situation in Derna has been stable for the last few months, residents continue to bear the impact of the

conflict. In March, a local civil society organization held a children's festival in Derna with support from USAID/OTI. This two-day event was organized in collaboration with local groups. The festival was attended by more than 200 children and residents, with priority given to internally displaced persons (IDPs), and included music, games, and art activities for kids. The event reminded residents of the moderate culture of Derna and provided a much-needed opportunity for recreation and interaction.

- *Office Space for the Election Commission:* On May 2, 2018, IS affiliated suicide bombers stormed HNEC's Tripoli-based headquarters, severely damaging the offices and causing many fatalities. Following the attack, the office location was deemed unsafe for rebuilding, and the Government of National Accord assigned new headquarters. The new buildings need significant refurbishment before they are ready for use. LTI 3 provided six trailers to serve as temporary office space at the new site, as well as office furniture for the buildings that have already been rehabilitated. This assistance is enabling a key national institution to re-establish itself and be ready to administer elections, which will enable the credibility of Libya's future electoral processes.

- *Celebrating Sabha's Shared Cultural Heritage*: Fighting between armed elements of the Tebu and Awlad Suleiman communities caused extensive damage to the social fabric. Residents of Sabha continue to feel the psychological impact of the recent violence and express frustration about the slow pace of recovery. With LTI3 support, a local civil society organization held a Heritage Festival in Sabha's Old City to celebrate the city's shared cultural history and promote unity. This event brought together community members from multiple tribes to showcase traditional dance, music, handicrafts, clothing, and food. The festival was attended by an estimated 8,000 men, women, and children, representing the diverse tribal communities of Sabha. Attendees noted that the performances and children's activities provided a much-needed sense of normalcy and community connection. For many residents, this was one of the first large-scale public events they have attended since before the 2018 conflict.

SYRIA REGIONAL PROGRAM II

The Syria Regional Program II (SRP II) is a three-year program with two one-year option periods and a ramp-up period and a total estimated cost of $211,127,050. It was awarded on August 28, 2015. The program builds on the work of the Syria Regional Program (also implemented by Chemonics) and aims to build a moderate, inclusive and stable Syria by: 1) enabling the early recovery of areas newly liberated from the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS); 2) strengthening communities to better resist extremism; and 3) maintaining and increasing the influence of strategic moderate entities. In June 2018, USAID/OTI exercised the ramp-up option of SRP II task order which led to the rapid establishment of Iraq Community Resilience Initiative (ICRI) in Erbil, Iraq. ICRI was initiated to support the safe and voluntary return of displaced populations, including minorities, in areas liberated from ISIS, by improving stability and social cohesion in northern Iraq.

In this reporting period, SRP II has been in Phase III – Option year 1. The project ramped up operations and grants activities across the Berlin (hereafter referred to as "SCSI") and Turkey (hereafter referred to as "SRP") platforms, reaching the milestone of 220 activities in the database for an approximate value of $45.7 million, including 213 closed or completed activities and 7 cleared activities in implementation. Further, during this reporting period, a revised emergency and information security plan, accruals report, annual report, agricultural commodities report were submitted, and weekly status reports kept USAID/OTI updated on the progress of SRP and SCSI platforms. SRP II has no administrative or bureaucratic constraints to performance to report. During this reporting period, SRP II received one task order modification:

Examples of key activities implemented during this reporting period include:

- *Community-based approach to early recovery of newly liberated areas through basic services:* Since Raqqa's liberation from ISIS in October 2017, the SRPII partner Early Recovery Team (ERT) has been working in the city through rapid response mechanisms, which enabled them to clean up streets by removing rubble and debris and distributing water and bread to civilians in the city over the past few months. With the support of USAID/OTI and the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), this activity builds on previous efforts that enabled the return of residents and made Raqqa more livable by removing rubble from the city's streets. Community members identified the repair of 11 streets in the city that residents currently use on daily basis as priority. During this reporting period, the ERT carried out these repairs, including the removal of mud and damaged surfaces, as well as the grading, layering and compacting of new surfaces. By completing this activity and other similar ones on a routine basis, the ERT is filling service provision gaps in northeastern Syria, which continues to contribute to the larger strategy of early recovery and increased stabilization in northeastern Syria allowing people to return to their homes and reestablish their lives.
- *Providing capacity support to the Syria Civil Defense (SCD) by distributing emergency response vehicles and heavy equipment to the SCD centers across Syria:* The Syria Civil Defense continues to be a vital actor in areas outside the regime's control. SCD is a non-partisan emergency response organization that has a presence across non-regime held areas in Syria and has been active since 2013. They are involved in both emergency response work, as well as stabilization efforts in areas not witnessing excessive levels of violence. With support from USAID/OTI, thirteen firefighting trucks, three-wheel loaders, three tipper trucks, and four water trucks were delivered to northwestern Syria. The emergency response vehicles and heavy equipment are being distributed to SCD centers according to need, enabling the SCD to continue offering lifesaving operations and other key services to civilians. During this reporting period, SCD volunteers have responded to record levels of regime shelling and airstrikes, particularly in Idleb Province.

IRAQ COMMUNITY RESILIENCE INITIATIVE

The Iraq Community Resilience Initiative (ICRI) was established in June 2018 as a Ramp-up Option under the Syria Regional Program II (SRP II) task order to promote the overall goal of supporting the safe and voluntary return of displaced populations, including minorities, in areas liberated from ISIS. The project works through two objectives to support this goal: 1) improving stability in conflict-affected areas; and 2) improving social cohesion in conflict affected areas.

In this reporting period, ICRI was in full implementation. The project implemented an expansion of operations and TAP activities after receiving additional funding in the final days of the previous reporting period, which extended ICRI's implementation timeline through mid-2019. This included fielding additional surge support from DC to increase the project's capacity to develop and clear activities as well as hiring more local operations and program staff. ICRI also fielded a new Regional Program Manager in December 2018. The Iraq Regional Program (IRP) officially began operations in the field in January 2019, and ICRI has been coordinating closely with IRP since then on both operational and programmatic matters. As of March 31, 2019, ICRI cleared a total of 61 activities for implementation over the life-of-project.. Thirty-three of these activities are completed and/or closed. Furthermore, during this reporting period, submission of the Phase 5 staffing plan, a revised branding implementation and marking plan, two quarterly accruals reports, an obligation and CLIN adjustment pipeline, a cost allocation methodology for ICRI and IRP, and weekly status reports kept USAID/OTI updated on the progress of ICRI's platform.

ICRI has faced limited administrative and bureaucratic constraints in regard to banking, although these constraints have not affected overall performance of the project. Due to delays obtaining a bank account in Iraq, Chemonics established a bank account in Jordan for large payments to partners and vendors as a temporary measure. In collaboration with IRP, ICRI has also made progress towards opening a bank account in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and hopes to secure this capability in the next reporting period. ICRI contributes to improving stability in Ninewa province and surrounding communities by supporting civil society and faith-based organizations and local governance actors to restore livelihoods and basic services in conflict-affected areas.

In addition to accelerating recovery efforts, ICRI aims to improve social cohesion in Ninewa Province and surrounding communities by fostering positive interactions between diverse political, ethnic, and sectarian groups. By supporting activities that provide meaningful opportunities to strengthen the cohesion and resilience of communities, ICRI hopes to accelerate the reconciliation process and encourage displaced families to return to their homes. Key activities implemented during this period include:

Key activities during this implementing period include:

- *Streetlights and Public Road Safety in Qaraqosh and Karamles.* Following the battle of Mosul, the areas of Qaraqosh and Karamles were left devastated. Critical public

safety infrastructure was destroyed and remains a highly visible daily reminder of the havoc wreaked by ISIS. ICRI supported a local NGO to install lighting and public safety infrastructures. In total, the NGO installed 226 speed bumps and 360 traffic signs on key roads in Qaraqosh and Karamles, particularly near schools, clinics, and other public facilities, in coordination with Hamdaniya district officials. Improving and restoring public safety measures is an important step towards restoring safe conditions for the return of IDPs.

- *Restoring Livelihoods in Bartella: Equipping the Sewing Factory.* The Bartella Sewing Factory, a government facility established by the Ministry of Industry and Minerals in Iraq, was a key employer in the area has been operational since 2009. Structural rehabilitation took place in 2018 to repair damage done under ISIS, but stolen equipment was not replaced. The limited quantities of functioning equipment resulted in delays and inefficiencies in the factory's production. Through this grant, ICRI delivered more than 60 industrial sewing machines, embroidery equipment, and other accessories, allowing the factory to increase its overall productivity. As productivity increases, the sewing factory will need to hire additional workers, improving the labor market in Bartella, and encouraging the return of IDPs.

- *Sinjar Student Transportation.* ICRI launched "Sinjar Student Transportation," an activity that aims to provide reliable transportation from periphery communities into Sinjar and Sinuni center where re-opened schools are located. Many schools in periphery communities Khanasour, Zohrava, and Gohbal have either not been able to re-open or lack the resources to cover student needs. Students, most of them recent returnees, are forced to walk long distances or pay for expensive private taxis to attend school, which has discouraged students returning to school. In cooperation with an international advocacy and humanitarian NGO and the Ministry of Transportation, ICRI provided support to rent and operate buses to transport nearly 1,200 students in 15 periphery communities in Sinjar and Sinuni for the Spring term as a temporary measure. As part of this activity, ICRI and the NGO will also conduct community-wide consultations throughout the district to discuss permanent solutions to address school resource and access needs, and provide recommendations for education officials, government stakeholders, and NGO partners.

- *Peace Through Arts: Making Music in Mosul. As* Iraq's second largest city, Mosul was a center for art, music, and cultural innovation and wealth. ICRI supported a local NGO to harness the power of music to foster positive community interaction, and promote a message of peaceful coexistence, while demonstrating the revival of the arts and culture scene in Mosul after ISIS' occupation. The NGO paired 25 professional musicians from Baghdad and other areas with 20 musicians and music students from Mosul to carry out five days of music rehearsals and workshops on the use of art as a peace-building tool. The activity included two public concerts (forbidden under ISIS rule) – one in East Mosul and one in West Mosul – attended by the public, civil society leaders, and local authorities. By holding the first concert in the East, and then a second concert in the more heavily destroyed West, the activity symbolized a "march" of progress toward rebuilding from East to West.

IRAQ REGIONAL PROGRAM

The USAID/OTI Iraq Regional Program (IRP) TO is a 41-month program with three program expansion option periods, as well as regional programming option periods. It was awarded on September 5, 2018. IRP aims to restore civil authority, assist conflict-affected, marginalized populations, and support overall efforts aimed at preventing the return of violent extremist groups in Iraq and the surrounding region. IRP does so in order to 1) accelerate recovery in liberated areas; 2) support locally legitimate Iraqi actors in providing responsive leadership; and 3) repair and strengthen the social fabric between and within Iraqi communities. IRP also works to fulfill these objectives by utilizing immediate, tangible, and sustainable benefits provided in an inclusive and representative manner to local communities previously victimized, sympathetic to, or exploited by the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), or others who may try to fill the vacuum.

During this reporting period, IRP has been in Phase 1- Start-Up. With the support of a dedicated start-up team, the project established its central administrative office in Erbil, recruited and on-boarded 43 staff members, and registered as an LLC in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI)—a critical step for its operations. This momentum was supported by a range of ongoing short-term start-up assignments from Chemonics staff in grants, recruitment, procurement, finance, environmental compliance, business compliance, and operations.

Further, during this reporting period Chemonics submitted a wide range of deliverables to fulfill the deliverable requirements for Phase 1- Start-Up, including the Phase 1 Work Plan, Phase 1 Staffing Report and Staffing Plan, the Branding Implementation and Marking Plan, the Activity Cycle Flowchart, the Activity Manual Addendum, and the Plan for Obtaining In-Country Legal Status of Proof of Legal Status. Other key deliverables that were submitted to USAID/OTI before the end of Phase 1 on April 6th include the Security Plan, the Phase 2 Work Plan, the Environmental Management and Compliance Documents, and the Initial Inventory. IRP also submitted the Phase 2 staffing plan to USAID/OTI on April 25th, following this reporting period.

In addition to programmatic start-up, IRP cleared three activities for implementation during this reporting period. Activities during this period focused on improving critical service delivery, expanding the engagement of key partners across Iraq, and supporting emergency response assistance. IRP has no administrative or bureaucratic constraints to performance to report.

Key activities cleared during this reporting period include:

- *Strengthening Civil Defense Services in Mosul.* With support from USAID/OTI, first responders) are improving their ability to deliver critical services to residents of both East and West Mosul. The physical reconstruction of Mosul after the defeat of ISIS has been progressing slowly. The province's Civil Defense Directorate

(CDD), headquartered in Mosul, receives greater public trust than local government entities and has played a significant role in the city's recovery process. The CDD is currently responding to service needs, including education, waste management, and rubble and corpse removal, with the limited equipment and supplies available, but if assisted has the potential to serve as a more effective service provider supporting Mosul and Nineveh Province's recovery. USAID/OTI is providing the CDD with light equipment and safety gear, which was identified by the CDD as critical to their daily operations in order to serve the populations in their purview. The provision of this assistance contributes to efforts to create the necessary conditions for the safe and successful return of internally displaced persons (IDPs) to Nineveh Province.

- *Support for critical emergency response assistance to flooding in Mosul.* With support from USAID/OTI, a local partner is able to more efficiently respond to flooding in Mosul with critical emergency response assistance through the establishment of a rapid response mechanism. The partner is headquartered in Mosul and has played a significant role in Mosul's recovery with its 800 employees, most of which are based in the city. The partner delivers critical services, including emergency response assistance, despite its limited capacity following the destruction of its equipment by ISIS. Most recently, in response to a ferry sinking due to flooding of the Tigris River in late March 2019, the partner was only able to mobilize two boats to support rescue missions. The partner is also responding to continued rains in Mosul after the ferry tragedy by rescuing residents trapped by flooding. In support of these efforts, USAID/OTI established a rapid response mechanism for the partner to request critical emergency response assistance, including the procurement of blankets, pumps, and sandbags. The provision of this assistance directly contributes to efforts to increase stability in Ninewa Province and strengthen confidence in local institutions.

NORTH MACEDONIA SUPPORT INITIATIVE

USAID/OTI's North Macedonia Support Initiative (NMSI[1]) complements the US government and USAID Mission efforts to support North Macedonia's integration into the broader Euro-Atlantic community. The program seeks to entrench democratic processes around urgent reforms that are preconditions to the EU accession process. To this end, the program provides targeted, flexible, short-term assistance to key stakeholders (Government of North Macedonia, public institutions, civil society, and the media) seeking to advance critical components of the reform agenda.

Between October 1, 2018 and March 31, 2019, NMSI started and completed in-country program startup, full recruitment of local staff, and initiated nine activities for a

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[1] NMSI's original title was the Macedonia Support Initiative II (MSI II). This was adjusted in February 2019 following the adoption of the Prespa Agreement name change.

committed total of $775,423.87. Activities during this period focused on short-term technical assistance (STTA) to key Macedonian institutions, professionalizing independent media organizations, and anti-corruption within government commissions.

Key activities implemented during this reporting period include:

- *Detektor: Journey to EU accession and NATO membership:* Since December 2018, NMSI has engaged consultants to support one of North Macedonia's biggest media companies in its efforts to produce its first news magazine. Titled Detektor, the show uses opinion poll data to elevate conversations about topics related to North Macedonia's Euro-Atlantic integration. To date, the show has covered topics such as air pollution, corruption, clientelism, judicial reforms, and the presidential elections. Detektor has consistently ranked as North Macedonia's most-watched political talk show. Its episodes are often watched by over 151,000 people out of North Macedonia's population of around 2 million. Close to one-in-four Macedonians watching TV at the time Detektor was addressing the issue of corruption on March 17th opted to watch the show as opposed to other available content. Detektor's average watch time per viewer often exceeds 20 minutes of the 30-minute show. Additionally, numerous other broadcasters have picked up content from the show.
- *Supporting transparency and accountability through travel and knowledge sharing:* On March 29th, NMSI supported the Government of North Macedonia in its effort to deepen collaboration with the Government of Greece by helping to convene journalists and civil society representatives in Athens to discuss the issue of fake news and misinformation surrounding the lead up to the signing of the Prespa Agreement in 2018. NMSI sponsored five civil society and ten media representatives to attend the bilateral forum titled "Misinformation and the Prespa." The forum was jointly organized by the Ministry of Information Society and Administration (MISA) of North Macedonia and the Ministry of Digital Policy, Telecommunications and Media of Greece. The event marked both a timely and important reminder that misinformation on the Prespa Agreement exists and that it can be a threat to political progress as the Agreement continues to be implemented. As a result of the forum, civil society and media representatives committed to deepen their working relationships in order to collectively counter misinformation moving forward.
- *Improved systems for conflict of interest monitoring:* Beginning in March 2019, NMSI provided technical assistance to a government commission tasked with tackling corruption in North Macedonia to enable its newly elected commissioners to be more effective in addressing conflicts of interest and other corruption issues. As acknowledged in the Priebe Report on Rule of Law in North Macedonia and as further illustrated by the notoriously low 93rd place the country occupies on Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index, "corruption is the most serious problem facing the country." NMSI has engaged experts that help the commission to respond to requirements of the newly-enacted Law on Prevention of Corruption and Conflict of Interest by aligning conflict of interest disclosure forms with EU standards. NMSI is also helping the commission assess

the technology infrastructure necessary to better verify and validate the information provided through this newly-designed electronic disclosure form. In doing so, this activity works to strengthen a key government entity's ability to design, adopt, and implement critical reforms required by EU standards.

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